

F

685

S74

Speer, John
Address on
accuracy in history.

Topeka, Jan. 11, 1898



Class -685

Book S74

ADDRESS

OF

JOHN SPEER,

¹¹
President of the Kansas State Historical Society,

ON

ACCURACY IN HISTORY,

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL MEETING OF THE SOCIETY,

AT

TOPEKA, JANUARY 13, 1898.

J. S. PARKS, STATE PRINTER.
TOPEKA,
1898.

OFFICERS—1898.

JOHN SPEER, *President*, - - - - - Garden City.
EUGENE F. WARE, *Vice-President*, - - - Topeka.
W. A. PEFFER, *Vice-President*, - - - - - Topeka.
JOHN GUTHRIE, *Treasurer*, - - - - - Topeka.
FRANKLIN G. ADAMS, *Secretary*, - - - - - Topeka.

IMPORTANCE OF ACCURACY IN HISTORICAL STATEMENTS.

THE settlement of Kansas was made in the throes of a political revolution ; and the character of her people and their acts must be gauged by a state of embryo war, leading up to a war which had no parallel in the civilized world. We were but a few years removed from a condition of public sentiment when, even in the most enlightened portions of the North, the attempt to discuss slavery at all had been met with tar and feathers, lynching, and many other modes of torture. Even in enlightened Boston the clamor of the mob of "men of wealth and respectability" had hardly passed away, when the very elite of that city had pursued the poor fugitive Anthony Burns and delivered him up to the slave power, and the rope had been tied to the neck of William Lloyd Garrison, and he had narrowly escaped the scaffold. Up to the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska organic act, it was dangerous to express sympathy with the slave anywhere, and peril of death to do it near the border slave states.

When Kansas was declared subject to settlement, the very best class of citizens were ready to harness their teams and pack their baggage for a land which had been heralded to the world as having scarcely an equal in fertility and productive resources. The temp-

tation of homes in Kansas aroused the ambition of the very best elements of civilization, and there was no discount on the heroic courage of the men and women who dared venture upon the unique pioneer life now offered to the world. What followed the wildest theorist never predicted. Settlers from the North had no ambition to enter into war. Arguments were their weapons; they expected a conflict of reason and of intellect, in which the ballot was to settle the question of whether the new state was to be free or slave. They came unarmed and unsuspecting of violence.

On the part of the slave power, it is true, threats had been sent abroad that "abolitionists" never should be allowed to enter Kansas. These threats, however, were regarded as bravado, until the rifle and revolver in the hands of the devotees of slavery made the welkin ring. The first night I slept upon Kansas soil (September 26, 1854), our small party of emigrants from free states were awakened by demands of where we were from, and threats of expulsion, tarring and feathering, hanging and drowning, to every "abolitionist" who dared to enter Kansas. The second night after reaching Lawrence we were called to defend the Rev. Thomas J. Ferril, a Methodist minister, who had just arrived with his bride. No retaliation was attempted. At the first election for members of the legislature, March 30, 1855, 1,000 armed invaders from Missouri seized the polls and voted at Lawrence, and similar bodies at Leavenworth, Delaware, Kickapoo, and many other places, electing a pro-slavery legislature. That was an all-sufficient cause for resistance; and the man who

would have fired a battery into one of those camps would have been as heroic a patriot as they who defended Lexington and Bunker Hill; yet the free-state men bided their time in peace, although eight months of threats, outrage and usurpation had gone by.

Several free-state men's houses were destroyed in the spring and summer of 1855, but no retaliation. To avoid a conflict of arms, the peace-loving free-state men met at Big Springs, Douglas county, September 8, 1855, to consider means for a peaceful solution of the troubles. They had borne their afflictions then for more than a year. On November 21, 1855, Chas. W. Dow, a peaceable free-state man, was murdered in cold blood by a pro-slavery man. All that was attempted was to hold a meeting for the expression of sympathy for the friends of the dead, and condemnation of the murderer.

Fifteen months of peaceful acts of the free-state men had passed, and no revenge or retaliation. Just then a peaceful old man from Indiana, Jacob Branson, so mild in his manners that, although I knew him pretty well, I never found out his politics, was arrested without being shown a warrant, tortured by being placed upon a mule and hurried through woods and over hills and prairies until he was unable to dismount without help. For his rescue a body of twelve free-state men was quickly organized. Meeting a body of the same number having the free-state prisoner, his release was demanded, and secured without bloodshed. This brought on the Wakarusa war, so called, a siege of Lawrence, the erection of rifle-pits and all necessary means for defense—not against their neighbors, but

against an invasion of 1,200 men from Missouri. Every effort for peace had been exhausted. Sixteen months had passed without a single hand having been raised against the persons or property of pro-slavery men.

As an eye-witness of the affairs of Kansas in all this period, I solemnly declare, and defy contradiction, and call on any man in this audience to deny, these facts. It seems almost cowardice to admit them. I am speaking of occurrences the like of which afflicted all the free-state settlements.

On the approach of winter, a peace-loving people, their wives and their little ones illy provided for—a winter the severest that has ever occurred in Kansas—were assailed for 16 days by armed hordes of foreign enemies to freedom, because they refused to abandon their homes and their hearths or forswear their devotion to liberty and the universal rights of man. Thus the armies stood. In this desperate strait, Dr. Charles Robinson, afterwards Governor Robinson, as commander-in-chief, and James H. Lane, in active command, ready for the charge, Governor Shannon at length suggested, or agreed to a consultation, and a peace was patched up, and a fearful slaughter, which no man can estimate, averted. During this threatened conflict a dozen armed pro-slavery men, Geo. W. Clarke one of the number, rode down three farmers returning to their homes, and Clarke murdered Thos. W. Barber, of whom more hereafter.*

* These notes were not in the speech, but I asked "leave to print":

May 17, 1855, William Phillips, of Leavenworth, was captured and taken to Weston, Mo., his head shaved, his clothes stripped off, tarred and feathered, and sold at auction by a negro. The charge was signing a protest against the 30th of March election. Wild-

And yet, with all this record of patient, agonizing suffering, men of the East, men of learning in colleges, are writing assaulting articles upon the early settlers of Kansas, as natural murderers, assassins, gamblers, thieves—guilty of all the crimes in the calendar of criminology. And even some of our own teachers in our schools of learning have been led into like errors. It is time that some words of protest should be uttered against this style of Kansas history. Let us quote from a work written by a professor in our State University, intended for the instruction of youth in our Kansas schools. After reciting the two classes, free-state and pro-slavery, in his book, entitled ‘‘Civil Government of Kansas,’’ Prof. F. H. Hodder describes a third class thus :

“The third class consisted of adventurers of various sorts from both sections: broken-down politicians; restless, lawless men, to whom the restraints of civilization were irksome; gamblers, ruffians, and fugitives from justice—a class of men who always drift to new countries. They cared not whether slavery was voted up or down, but were ready to embrace any party that promised them office and power, and welcomed a state of society in which murder, arson and robbery would go unpunished. It was the presence of this class, ranged as they were

er’s Annals, page 64. He was afterwards murdered in his own house, his blood spurring upon the garments of a bride, a guest of the family (Mrs. Nancy A. G. Leibey, of Lawrence), as innocent of wrongdoing as the babes whom Herod slew.

January 20, 1856, Reese P. Brown, for participation in the free-state election, was hacked to pieces with hatchets, carried to his home in a farm wagon, rudely delivered to his wife, where he told her he had been cruelly murdered without a cause, and died within two hours.

Mr. Mitchell, a Kentuckian, a free-state man, who had befriended Brown, was early in the next summer bucked and gagged, and left on the prairie to die, but was rescued.

June 6, 1856, a peaceable Kansas free-state man, Jacob Cantrell, who emigrated from Missouri, was traveling on the highway, with this device on his wagon cover: “Kansas a Free State.” He was captured, and hung for treason to Missouri.”

on both sides in the political contest, that accounts largely for the disorder and bloodshed in the early history of the state.”

This third class the learned author makes so prominent and leading that the fact of their presence “accounts largely for the disorder and bloodshed in the early history of the state.” He so magnifies this class that the great struggle for principle between the free-state men who were in the right, and the pro-slavery men who were in the wrong, sinks into insignificance. This foisting of a fictitious and imaginary class as an important element in the Kansas struggle gives a false coloring to the whole conflict. In the estimation of the civilized world, the question of whether human slavery should be further extended over the free soil of America, or whether it should be checked in its progress further, was fought out nobly here on Kansas soil by as brave, enlightened and heroic a set of men and women as ever in the world’s history battled for a just cause.

This mode of treatment is entirely untrue as to the free-state men, and it is injustice even to the pro-slavery men as a body. Slavery was a barbarity, and there is no instance in history where the forces fighting for the wrong were the best and most moral men; but the South selected the most heroic and best men of the period to lead in the conflict, and raised money for this purpose. Many of these men, on all other questions, were gentlemen.*

* For instance, Gen. Joe Shelby, who suspended his business at Lexington, Mo., and with forty of his hands came to Lawrence and voted; and with whom I took dinner that day at Col. Sam. N. Wood’s house. It was the manifestation of conditions. The “abolitionist” was considered a “negro thief,” and the man who interfered with such “property” was considered as much worse than a horse thief as the slave was regarded more valuable than a horse.

I venture to assert (and this can only be opinion, but my opinion ought to be as good as that of a man from the East who was not born at that time) that there never was in this country, in the settlement of any territory, so honorable, upright, intelligent a body of men as settled Lawrence—the headquarters of the free-state forces in the first two years of the conflict. Their first act was to establish prohibition, by the Lawrence Association, with Doctor Robinson as its president. The charge that “broken-down politicians” were a leading element is answered in the fact that in the first legislature elected by the free-state voters there was not a single man in either house who had ever before sat officially in a legislative body. It would be most interesting to follow their later careers as soldiers and statesmen, at least two of them leading brigades. Only one in both bodies was ever known as of intemperate habits.

Another error: Of the Leavenworth constitution Professor Hodder says (page 22) :

“Notwithstanding the veto of Secretary Denver, who was soon after appointed governor, delegates were elected, and met at Minneola, whence they adjourned to Leavenworth. Here a free-state constitution was adopted, identical in large part with the Topeka constitution.”

It is utterly unaccountable how, from so able a source, an error like this should have crept into a book for schools. It implies that a mob, without the semblance of law, after their own party had almost unanimous control in both branches of the legislature, had assembled and made a constitution, and attempted to force it upon the people. I know this

error has been circulated through several sources. The truth is, Secretary Denver never vetoed that bill. It was passed in all the regular forms, and taken to his office by the clerk three days, one hour and ten minutes before the expiration of the 40 days which constituted the term; and the governor had gone to bed and left word with his clerk to receive no more messages. It was his duty under the law to either sign and return it, or to return it vetoed, within three days; but he "pocketed" it and refused to return it, attempting thus to defeat it, because the legislative term, as he erroneously asserted, had not expired — an act of tyranny without an example. This statement both houses of the legislature unanimously affirmed, and declared the bill passed, notwithstanding the governor refused to sign it, but withheld it without his approval.* These facts were attested by the clerk of the house, Mr. Whiting, and Mr. Caleb S. Pratt, of the council, as well as by Perry Fuller and other private citizens; and I superintended the preparation and delivery of the bill, and saw it taken to his room, as I now state.

The men whom this statement represents as unlawfully assembled, usurping the powers of a convention, were as capable and worthy a body as would generally have been selected at any period of Kansas history. The charge against that body is an insult to the intelligence of the people who elected them. Three of them were afterwards generals in the army (James

*The language of the organic act is precisely that of the United States constitution, except that "three days" is in the former and "ten days" in the latter; and hundreds of bills have become laws just as this act did — notably the Wilson tariff bill.

H. Lane, Thos. Ewing, and Robert B. Mitchell). Among them were such able lawyers as Chief Justice Ewing, Senator P. B. Plumb, and Jas. S. Emery; and Hon. T. Dwight Thacher, also a member, has written a history of the convention, which will be read with interest in after-times as a refutation of the charge that it was possible for such a body of men to have assumed, ignorantly or wickedly, any such position.

In the same work, on page 22, Professor Hodder, after saying that "southeastern Kansas was at first almost entirely settled by pro-slavery men from the southern states" — in which he was mistaken, at least two-thirds of them being free-state — mildly adds :

"A few free-state men had come here, however, and in the autumn of 1856 one Captain Clarke attacked them, destroyed their property, and drove them from their homes. The free-state men organized for defense under the leadership of James Montgomery, and, finding guerrilla warfare quite to their liking, continued to raid and rob pro-slavery men, both in Kansas and Missouri, for a year or more. In the spring of 1858, Chas. A. Hamilton, of West Point, Mo., raised a band of men for the purpose of making reprisals. Crossing the Kansas line to Trading Post, Linn county, on the 19th day of May, 1858, he seized 11 free-state men, and, taking them to a ravine near the Marais des Cygnes, shot them down in cold blood. Five of the men were instantly killed, five were seriously wounded but afterwards recovered, and one escaped unharmed by feigning death."

"One Captain Clarke" indeed! What mildness is this in stating a pretended historical fact as to the infamous conduct of that most infamous man! The true history of his conduct reads thus :

Capt. Geo. W. Clarke, the murderer of Thos. W. Barber in cold blood in 1855, having fled the country, again ap-

peared on the unprotected frontier in the free-state settlements in southeastern Kansas, and renewed his assaults upon these helpless people. He was the same man who, at a Lawrence town-site meeting in the winter of 1854-'55, attempted to murder Governor Robinson, and probably would have murdered him, had not one John Speer jumped upon him from his seat in the audience and partially wrested his revolver from him and turned it upon his own heart, and held it in such a position that any attempt to pull the trigger would have killed the assassin, until one Wilson, a Kentuckian, interfered and secured peace. This was at a meeting at Lawrence in regard to the town-site rights, in which Clarke had no interest, and where he was brought as a "killer." Before his attempt on Robinson he knocked Mr. Alphonso Jones off the stand while he was speaking. He also had a tilt with J. H. Shimmons with rifles not long after. On another occasion he had arranged to assassinate Jones one night as the latter was expected to be returning from an anti-slavery meeting, and would in all probability have succeeded had not Clarke's slave Judy got to Mr. Jones's window the night before, and in a shrill whisper said, "Massa Jones, dey's gwine to kill you as you come from dat abolition meetin' ef you don't look out! Min' w'at I say! I'ze off!" At this meeting, Ed. Chapman, the man then holding the Jenkins claim near Lawrence, was backing Clarke up; he was the man who chopped down Robinson's house, for which, among other merits, he was soon after elected a member of the "bogus" pro-slavery territorial legislature; and, as soon after that as he could spare time from his legislative duties, he murdered Geo. Wilson, of North Carolina, by a blow from a club, while Wilson's daughter of 16 sat by his side in a buggy. Wilson's death right then was only prevented by that child seizing the whip and reins and driving to Westport, Mo. (35 miles), where she appealed to the Odd Fellows, who ministered to him till his death, and buried him with the honors of the Order; and that murderer, Chapman, afterward went to the penitentiary by the way of Iowa, and still later to that other place.

"With all his crimes broad blown as flush as May:
And how his audit stands, who knows save Heaven?
But in our circumstance and course of thought,
'Tis heavy with him."

That is the true history of Clarke and one of his confederates in crime. They were twin criminals and conspirators, whose history cannot be separated.

I had but slight acquaintance with Capt. James Montgomery, but I know he was not a disreputable man, seeking innocent blood, nor stealing property, and that he had a following of as honorable settlers as ever peopled any country. I mean no disrespect to the teacher, but I would like to see some bright, innocent little girl in a country schoolhouse hang her head, raise her hand, and say to Professor Hodder: "Please, master, may I ask some questions? An old settler spoke at our schoolhouse, on the Marmaton, and he told us that Preston B. Plumb, William A. Phillips, James B. Abbott, Dr. S. B. Prentiss, E. B. Whitman and several other gentlemen rallied to assist Captain Montgomery to protect us when the cold weather was coming, and we had nothing but corn bread and rabbit to eat, and the cabin needed chinking. Were they the broken-down politicians, gamblers, ruffians and fugitives from justice that you speak about on page 11 of your little book? Did the gamblers want to play poker with papa for the rabbits?"

Professor Hodder undoubtedly appreciates precisely the meaning of the word "reprisals," when he says in the extract we have quoted: "In the spring of 1858 Chas. A. Hamilton, of West Point, Mo., raised a band of men for the purpose of making *reprisals*." Would not that imply that Montgomery had invaded Missouri and murdered any of her citizens? We observe here that, in our extract, he states that two murderers, Clarke and Hamilton, leading their bands, had invaded Kansas from Missouri. We knew several of the men whom Hamilton stood up in line and murdered and wounded. Asa Hairgrove, one of the lat-

ter, became state auditor of Kansas, and from him I learned much of the character of the victims of Hamilton. There was not a disreputable man among them. I knew Doctor Miner, and helped dress the wounds of Rev. Mr. Reed, one of his "reprisals." "Death loves a shining mark." So do devils—for destruction. Hamilton might as well have kept on to Lawrence, and taken as a "reprisal" and murdered that distinguished divine whose name is on our programme here to-night, and who has recently celebrated his fortieth anniversary as a minister, Rev. Dr. Cordley. Perhaps the guerrillas who burned the house of Doctor Cordley, and took two or three shots at him in the Lawrence massacre, were merely attempting to make a "reprisal" of him, and if he had died, some professor of literature might have written an apology for Quantrill, as apologies have been written. It will be noted that all the murders occurred in Kansas, and all the murderers came from Missouri. Why did all the wounding and all the murdering occur on the Kansas side of the Missouri line? Kansas stood on her own side of the line, and stood for peace; and for more than four long years not one drop of blood by a Kansas hand ever stained the soil of Missouri; not one armed foe crossed the "sacred soil" of slavery, until it was crossed by troops under the flag of the Union and the call of Lincoln for men to put down the rebellion. Hamilton's "reprisal" of blood was as fiendish as ever disgraced the annals of crime, and was neither a "reprisal" under the definition of Webster nor Vattel.

I speak in no spirit of animosity—not in anger,

but in sorrow. In that spirit I have a right to reply even to a professor in a chair of the Kansas State University. I hope I am not intruding my own personality when I say, concerning the earliest movements towards the founding of the University of Kansas, that I have no memory of a more satisfactorily spent New Year's day than that of 1855, when I joined Dr. Chas. Robinson and A. D. Searle, the surveyor of Lawrence, to carry the chain, surveying a site for a "schoolhouse" where the "old university" now stands. If there was a better day spent in my own history, it was when I joined that eminent educator, Gen. John Fraser, in efforts to elevate the embryo University, in an appeal to the people of Lawrence for a vote of \$100,000 in its behalf. In the meeting to consider that proposition, a committee of prudent, economical business men reported in favor of \$50,000. General Fraser had stood in the serried ranks of war, but at this time he looked as if he might be "knocked down with a feather." I moved to strike out \$50,000 and insert \$100,000, and backed my proposition up by the best words I could utter, illustrating the importance of education by my own want of it. Bishop Thomas H. Vail, who was present, followed in the most eloquent appeal I ever heard, and the motion was carried. The "school" was ended and the University began; and to-day it stands, the pride and glory of Kansas — the peer of Yale, Harvard, or Michigan.

It is true — too true — that several books of history on Kansas have been issued in the East equally or more unjust than the work quoted. But such works

should never go into the schools of Kansas, and it is because of my pride in Kansas that I attempt to refute their falsity.

Within the past two years a convention was held at Houston, Texas, in which a learned committee consulted on devising a means to correct history, by showing that slavery was not the cause of the war, but some indefinable question of "state rights" was at the bottom of it all; and they suggested that some man learned in history should be selected to correct the false public sentiment; and recently General Reagan, the last of the Jefferson Davis cabinet, has been quoted as reiterating that sentiment. Since Baalam rode up the mountain on the only ass that ever talked good horse sense, for the purpose of cursing Israel, and rode down again "altogether blessing them," there has been no better tribute to the spirit of freedom which first broke out in Kansas and permeated the whole Union. Not only Kansas, but the South and the whole world is ashamed to be compelled to believe that the institution ever existed. It looks now as if a premium had been offered to some man to write a book proving that the Gettysburg speech was a fable, the emancipation proclamation a fraud, and old Abe not much of a statesman anyhow; and a lot of eastern professors were in the race, neck and neck, to win the prize.

If the war was not made upon Kansas solely to plant slavery here — and, indeed, to extend it through the union — why did not Pierce's administration say so? If that were true, why did not the President, instead of ordering Colonel Sumner to plant a battery

near where the Topeka post-office now stands, ready to fire upon and disperse the legislature under the Topeka constitution, send some peace officer and tell them to elect their free-state senators, and he would send a message to Congress recommending the state's admission? If slavery were not the issue, why did President Buchanan in 1858 send a special message to Congress, declaring that slavery existed as much in Kansas as it did in Georgia? Why did he, in that message, denounce Kansas as in rebellion, under a "turbulent and dangerous military leader"? All the "turbulent and dangerous" people of Kansas wanted was a free state, and that was after Buchanan's own governor, Robert J. Walker, had written to him that Kansas was on the wrong side of the "isothermal line" for slavery, that the people were opposed to it, and that the best possible way to do was to make it a democratic free state; and that then his administration "would go out in a blaze of glory."

Much of the enmity to Kansas has been aroused by eastern men in their contention as to who did the most to save Kansas. The position they get the nearest together on is, that in the aggregate they in the East did it all—that Kansas could n't have been saved without them. Measurably the latter proposition may be true. Without the sympathy, material aid and prayers of the good and great men all over the country, Kansas could not have been made free; but the brunt of the battle, the strife and the loss of life and treasure, fell upon the heroic men and women of Kansas. Nor do I depreciate the vast sums of money expended by the Emigrant Aid Com-

pany; nor have I ever forgotten the national convention at Buffalo, in 1856, presided over by Governor Reeder, in which I myself was a Kansas delegate, where Gerrit Smith planked down \$1,000, and pledged \$1,000 per month until Kansas should be made free; but what I do lament is, that so many "new kings have arisen who know not Joseph" except by tradition, going back on the deeds of their fathers, with few sources of information, sizing us up as savages, imagining that they are the priests preserving the history of the dark ages.

Archimedes said he could lift the world with a lever if he had a place to stand on. He was mistaken. The great men of the East have tested that question. No fulcrum can be used by which a corner-stone can be laid in Kansas, with the laboring end of the lever in New York or Boston. A Virginia slave, in describing the Natural Bridge, said: "I'll nevah forgit de day I driv master to see 'em lay de co'ner-stone of dat bridge! All de fust famblies was dar!" The men who laid the corner-stone of Kansas in Boston do not know whether that stone was carved from the everlasting granite of the Sangre de Cristo, or of the kaolin imbedded in the same mountains, beautiful to look upon, but crumbling with the atmosphere and dissolving with the summer rains.

Some of these men, if they were not so intensely Puritan, would claim that the Mayflower anchored at mid-sea, put out a lighter, and that the crew that sailed around by the Pacific put up the Holy Cross in the mountains one Saturday afternoon before prayers, and passed through to the eastward and discovered

Kansas long before Don Diego de Penalosa dreamed of the province of Quivera.

I was amazed to read in a magazine article an expression dropped by one of the most estimable patriots, philanthropists and divines, as well as among the most eminent litterateurs of this country, to the effect that he supposed there never were any slaves in Kansas. It is such utterances from such sources that hurt. What were we fighting about? The ruffian might bawl himself hoarse and do no harm. This good divine never was acquainted with Buck Scott, the good slave who contracted with his master to send him 70 per cent. of his earnings if he would let him live at Lawrence, and fulfilled his contract manfully, voluntarily returning to slavery. He never knew Tom Bourn, of Washington creek, whose master brought him and a dozen more slaves from Virginia "to establish the institution in Kansas," who, when the master got scared and wanted to take them back to "the old Virginia home," replied "No, no, Massa Bourn; I com' to 'stablish de institution, an' I'ze gwine to see it froo"; and in less time than two weeks ran off to the North with the whole gang! He never made the acquaintance of Bob Skaggs, who, with 27 fellow slaves, made a big clearing in the woods opposite Lecompton, and was run off to Texas at the sound of the voice of the "Crusader of Freedom," and came back "after the break up," as the slaves called it, and made a home on the Verdigris, and brought his "po' ol' massa" in his poverty to live with him, the ex-Kansas slave. He never sat with your speaker at the Big Springs hotel warming his toes, while poor Liza, one of 11

slaves of a Kansas judge, cooked his meal, with her little pickaninny crawling around her feet on a dirty dirt floor. He was not present when a fugitive from Kansas slavery on the Marais des Cygnes made her escape to Samuel N. Wood's house in Lawrence, her back cut in welts. Perhaps the good man was not acquainted with that amiable Christian woman, now a director of this society, when the slave sleuths were in pursuit; and surely he never heard her sobs and cries, "Oh God! what would I do if this were my sister?" when her life depended on flight. He never knew the three pro-slavery men who took the slave to the Shawnee Mission to consult the territorial officers, and returned her to slavery! And surely, surely, the good man never had a warrant issued for him as an "abolitionist" by that woman-whipper, after he was made a pro-slavery judge! He did not even know the pro-slavery divines of Kansas, one of whom, at Tecumseh, told me the beautiful story of St. Paul, the slave-driver, sending Onesimus, the slave, back to his master; the other at Osawkee, of whom it was said by the "abolitionists" that he was a pretty good man, but a little quarrelsome when he was drunk!

When the Wakarusa war broke upon us, there were more than half as many slaves in Kansas as there were able bodied free-state men who stood up in the ranks for our defense.

A few weeks ago I called upon the venerable Dr. J. N. O. P. Wood at Wichita, a well known opponent of the free-state movements, and compared notes on our personal knowledge of slaves in Kansas, and we counted over 400—and quit.

But they said "Shoo!" in Boston, as an old lady frightens chickens from her flower-beds, and the masters and the slaves fled in terror!

It is pleasant to know that some of these errors have been corrected.

In E. Taylor's History of the United States, the brief but admirably written history of Kansas by Noble L. Prentiss had two errors, which did great injustice to the memory of Governor Reeder. One represented him as calling the first legislature to elect members of the legislature and "county officers." There were no counties made, and he could not have ordered county officers elected; and one of the truthful accusations against the legislature was that it denied to the people the right to elect county officers, and elected them by the legislature, except the filling of vacancies by the governor (pro-slavery, of course) in their absence,* and no officers were elected by the people till the free-state men got power, in 1857.

The other error was a statement that "Governor Reeder signalized the beginning of his administration by an abortive attempt to remove the territorial legislature to Pawnee, near Fort Riley." He had no power to *remove* a legislature, and never attempted any such act. He called the first legislature to meet at that place, as was his duty by law. To have attempted to remove a legislature would have been an usurpation unparalleled in American government. I made an appeal to the publishers of that work, backed up by Col. C. K. Holliday, and the correction was

* See Kansas Historical Collections, Vol. 3, 1884, pp. 283, 284, 285, etc., and "Bogus" Laws.

made in both instances, with the approval of the author.

I have no doubt Professor Hodder will also make the proper corrections when he investigates the subject; but his books have gone out, and imperative duty demands that the children of the state and all posterity should have these corrections as extensively as possible; and the more so because this history of Kansas has been made a part of a school history of the United States, and thus goes to the world with all the authority of a "professor of American history in the University of Kansas."

In my long newspaper experience I have handled much poetry on the dead, and one verse of one of these effusions, though 50 years old, has never left my memory :

"And can it be
That God should take the best we see,
And leave behind a worthless lot
That we could spare as well as not?"

We cannot call up the dead and exhibit them here as samples of bravery, honesty, and virtue. We who are left can, as relics of the past, while we live, testify to their general good character, their great accomplishments, and point to their works—to the liberal and enlightened constitution which they left to us for our guidance; to the two preceding constitutions thwarted by tyranny; to the liberal and just laws, from year to year made more perfect under an instrument which has existed longer than the constitutions of many of the other states of the Union. We cannot call up the martyrs who died for freedom; but we can bring up our children even to this hall, where

they have placed the names of some of them in tablets of gold as mementoes of their patriotism, as the descendants of the Gracchi were for many generations wont to bring their children up to their temples to look upon their images in emulation of their virtues.

As the good die young, we can, however, still point to a goodly number of the "worthless lot left behind," whereby those who follow them can conjure up some imagination of what the men who "builded better than they knew" have done for those who come after them. We can now only at random point to a few around us as samples of the "worthless lot left behind," for whose characters we have no apology: Cyrus K. Holliday, John Armstrong, Copeland Gordon, Guilford Dudley, F. W. Giles, W. C. Garvey, of Topeka; B. W. Woodward, Jas. G. Sands, Wesley H. Duncan, Chas. S. Duncan, John G. Haskell, Peter D. Ridenour, H. W. Baker, Jas. C. Horton, L. J. Worden, Jeff. Wakefield, Ed. P. Harris, J. H. Simmons, O. E. Learnard, S. W. Eldridge, Paul R. Brooks, R. G. Elliott, and C. W. Smith, of Lawrence; D. R. Anthony, H. Miles Moore, Chas. Currier, E. N. O. Clough, Henry and Doc. Keller, of Leavenworth.

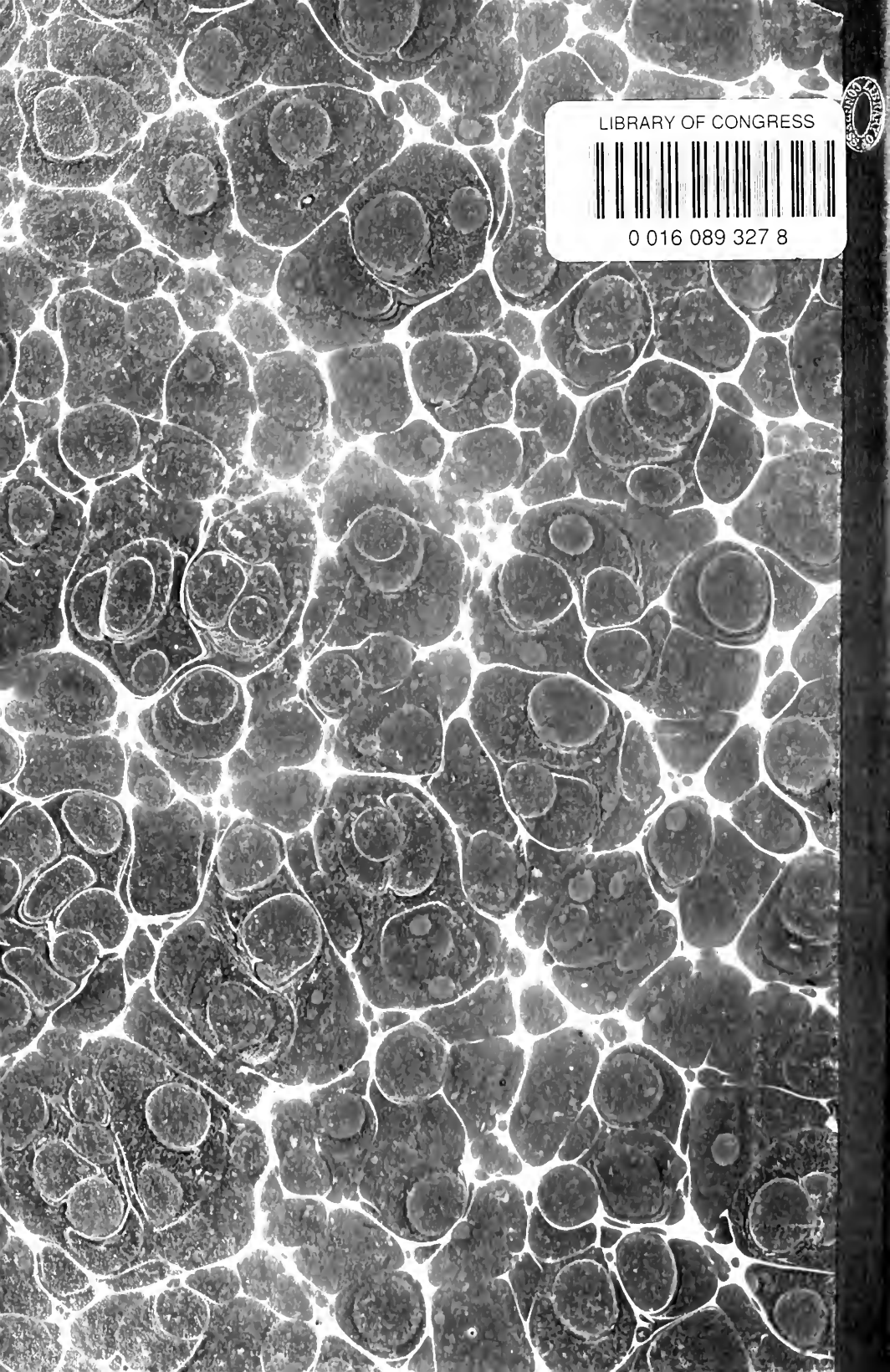
We have several more of the "worthless lot left behind," but we do not want to throw them to the front in a skirmish. These men remain, among the honored citizens of the three leading towns in which the great anti-slavery struggle in Kansas was fiercest. And I might mention that the veteran Secretary of this State Historical Society was one among those who bore a full part in that struggle in more than one of the towns mentioned. We can show them

the institutions these men inaugurated—the State University, the State Agricultural College, Baker University, and our great common-school system, our state-house and its occupants, most of whom are patterns of our pioneers; and we can go through the materials of the pioneer history of Kansas in the vast collections of our State Historical Society, the most complete and valuable possessed by any state, with possibly one exception.

Let us beg to apologize to our distinguished fellow citizens of the enlightened East, who have lived for three centuries under the restraints of law, the benefits of churches and schools, by humbly reminding them that, for nearly half the period of our territorial existence, we had no law. “We were a law unto ourselves.” In no other condition does man so exhibit all the bad elements of humanity. Yet here, left to ourselves, as the citizens of Kansas, unmolested by invasion, in no place was property safer than here. We paid our debts honestly, to the best of our ability. When misfortune rendered us unable to pay, the creditor forgave the debtor. The honor of the man was the only guaranty.

The golden rule was the guiding star of our existence. Some of us may not have been able to recite it, but all tried to follow it.

“Through all the warring seas of life
 One vast current sunward rolls,
 And, within all outward strife,
 One eternal right controls—
 Right, at whose divine command
 Slaves go free and captives fall,
 In the might of those who stand
 All for one and one for all.”



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 089 327 8

